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THE LITERARY DIGEST.

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## FROM FOREIGN LANDS.

### A REVOLUTIONARY REVIVAL IN RUSSIA.

RECENT utterances and acts of the new Czar have dashed the hopes of the Russian Liberals. After all, he seems to have determined to follow in the footsteps of his reactionary father. When he mounted the throne, reform was in the air. Both the Liberals and the Conservatives expected important political reforms, and in Europe generally it was believed that Nicholas would show himself to be a broad-minded and progressive monarch. Some of his first acts appeared to justify these hopes. Of late, however, certain manifestations of a reactionary spirit and policy have brought profound grief and disappointment to the Liberal elements of Russia. The declaration that has caused most dissatisfaction was that made by the Czar to the representatives of the Tver (a Russian province) nobility, who came to offer their congratulations. He warned them against cherishing any "absurd ideas" about constitutional reforms, and wanted them to understand distinctly that he was resolved to preserve the integrity of the autocracy. In his work for the welfare of his country, he said, he would not require the aid of any representatives. The publication of this pronouncement had an extremely bad effect on the Czar's subjects. The expressions of good-will, which had been pouring in from all quarters of the great empire, are said have diminished very perceptibly. Some political demonstrations in the universities soon followed, and many arrests had to be made. The People's Rights Party, a secret organization, issued a manifesto in the form of a letter to the Czar, which contained a plainly-worded warning. Rumor has it that Count Tolstoi, the great novelist and reformer, is the author of the manifesto, which runs as follows:

"The most advanced *Zemstvos* asked only for the harmony of Czar and people, free speech, and the supremacy of law over the arbitrariness of the executive. You were deceived and frightened by the representations of courtiers and bureaucrats. Society will understand perfectly that it was the bureaucrats who jealously guard their own omnipotence, that spoke through you. The bureaucracy, beginning with the council of ministers and ending with the lowest country constables, hates any development, social or individual, and actively prevents the monarch's free intercourse with the representatives of his people, except as they come in gala dress, presenting congratulations, icons, and offerings.

"Your speech proves that any attempt to speak out before the throne, even in the most loyal form, about the prime needs of the country, meets only a rebuff. Society expected from you encouragement and help, but received only a reminder of your omnipotence, giving the impression of utter estrangement of Czar from people. You yourself have killed your own popularity and have alienated all that part of society which is peacefully struggling forward. Some individuals are jubilant over your speech, but you will soon discover their impotence.

"In another section of society your speech caused a feeling of injury and depression which, however, the best social forces soon will overcome before proceeding to the peaceful but obstinate and deliberate struggle necessary to liberty. In another section your words will stimulate the readiness to struggle against the present hateful state of things with any means. You were the first to begin the struggle. Ere long it will proceed."

According to all accounts, a revival of revolutionary activity may be anticipated. The Nihilists, who had granted the Czar an armistice, hold themselves at liberty to resume operations. In view of these facts it is interesting to read a fuller statement of the demands of the Russian Liberals and of the reforms which, if granted by the Czar, would have averted the threatened conflict. Such a statement is contributed to *The Chautauquan*, March, by Mr. Victor Yarros, a Russian-American, who is thoroughly familiar with Russian conditions. We quote from his article on "The New Reign in Russia" as follows:

"Let us, however, inquire here into the nature of the reforms

to be anticipated from a liberal ruler in Russia who should resolve to grant the prayer of the progressive elements of his people. What *can* he do, given the will? What ought he to do? What do the Liberals ask? . . . Not even the most cautious and conservative reformers can find fault with it [the Liberals' demand] on the score of moderation and reasonableness. While the demand is vaguely for constitutional government, there is no doubt that even the shortest step in that direction will be hailed with joy and gratitude. An entering wedge would be gladly welcomed. Alexander III.'s plan for an assembly of elected notables as a consultative council would be taken as an earnest of greater things to come.

"What, however, is looked upon by all Liberals as the first reform needful, as the condition precedent to the success of all other reforms, is a free Press, or rather a freer Press. No right to indulge in reckless statement or libel is in question; all that is asked is the abolition of the censorship and the free utterance of honest opinion on all matters of public importance and interest. . . .

"But, after all, freer government and a freer Press are advocated in Russia more as means to certain ends than as ends in themselves. The country imperatively calls for economic, judicial, and educational reforms, and these would unquestionably constitute the first fruit of Press and political emancipation.

"First of all the land question presses for solution. The peasants, suffering from chronic famine and over-taxation, are still dreaming of a new distribution of the land. The communal system of ownership is disappearing under the pressure of poverty; the invasion of the capitalist landowner meets with no resistance. The peasants believe themselves entitled to the land of their former masters, and hope that the Czar will order the expropriation of the latter.

"Things cannot continue as they are; the peasants must have more land and a reduction of taxes and burdens. Whether the communal tenure should be displaced by individual holdings is a question upon which educated Russians are not a unit. All, however, are agreed on the urgency of the measures that would arrest the tendency toward the formation of a rural proletariat. Rural banks, Government credit, land acts similar to those carried in the British Parliament on behalf of the Irish tenantry, and similar proposals are made by writers informed upon the subject. . . .

"In close connection with this is the question of local self-government. Even within the narrow limits to which the Provincial Assemblies (*Zemstvos*) have been reduced by successive restrictions, the inability to raise means has obstructed their efforts in every direction. They depend on the income from land derived by the peasants and small proprietors, and the burdens of these could not be made heavier. The functions and activities of the Provincial Assemblies would be enlarged by any reform deserving of the name. There are no other organs through which to influence and affect popular interests in Russia. . . .

"Judicial reform is another plank in the Liberal platform. The great changes introduced in the early days of Alexander II. have nearly disappeared; only slight traces remain. Jury trial has been emasculated; the separation of the judiciary from the administrative power has been largely done away with, and the principle of publicity in the administration of justice has been trampled under foot. Not only in political cases, but in many classes of cases having but a remote connection with politics, 'justice' is administered in accordance with preemption notions. So far has the reactionary policy been carried that many boldly advocated the total abolition of trial by jury and the other reforms conferred by Alexander II. It is hardly necessary to say that the Liberals ardently desire the reassertion of the great principles involved in the strangled judicial reforms. . . .

"In the matter of education, the field of reform is infinite. In the villages, the farcical schools now controlled by the ignorant and overworked priesthood have to be replaced by schools properly so-called, and the number of them has to be increased enormously. . . . Owing to the dread of revolutionary propaganda, the number of high schools and gymnasia has been kept down, and education made too expensive to be within the reach of the poor. Finally, the universities have been deprived of their autonomy, and the students subjected to military discipline and surrounded by vexations and petty regulations. This policy would have to be reversed. Russia needs more educated citizens, not less, and the interests of a progressive ruler would not conflict with this

national need. The anti-education measures have affected the young women of Russia even more injuriously than the young men. Higher education, and the opportunities of qualifying themselves for the practise of the liberal professions, have been withheld from them, and hundreds have had to go abroad to study medicine since the closing of the medical school for women in St. Petersburg. Of late there has been some talk of reopening it, but the conditions it is proposed to impose would exclude those who need it most and who would prove most useful to society as workers.

"The repeal of all legislation against the Stundists and other religious sects, which have been relentlessly persecuted, and the abolition of the Jewish pale of settlement are also included in the reforms warmly advocated by Russian Liberals."

On the question whether Russia is ripe for constitutional government, Mr. Yarros writes as follows:

"It must be remembered that the masses of the people, the peasants, are entirely unaffected by the movements for constitutional government. The masses have not changed their attitude of religious veneration toward the Czar. To them his will is still divine law; to them he is still the source of all goodness and greatness. They believe him to be their best friend, protector, and champion. The Nihilists have totally failed in their efforts to shake the peasants' belief in the Czar. . . .

"But does this condition tend to weaken the case of the Liberals? Not at all. The real question is, not whether the peasants comprehend and desire political freedom, but whether political freedom is good for Russia as a whole, whether its development will be hastened by it. Certainly the peasants will not rise in rebellion to object to the introduction of constitutionalism. They will accept it from the Czar as a blessing *because* it is bestowed by him. Nor can there be any question of the ripeness or fitness of the country for freer government. Austria is scarcely more homogeneous than Russia, and its peasantry cannot be justly described as superior intellectually and morally to the Russian peasantry. If Austria is not impeded in her progress by constitutional government, there is surely nothing extravagant or revolutionary in the program of Russian intelligence."

### WESTERN CIVILIZATION FOR KOREA.

REFORM in Korea is not to remain an empty word. The Japanese are evidently bent upon introducing into Korea that Western civilization which has enabled them to overcome their gigantic rival for Asiatic predominance. In *The Korean Repository*, Seoul, Mr. Homer B. Hulbert enumerates some of the "Resolutions agreed to by the Korean Council of State," and reviews their possible effect upon the population. The most important of these resolutions are the following:

"Henceforth the year from the establishment of the dynasty is to be the date on all official documents within the Kingdom and without. The agreements with China shall be altered and ministers plenipotentiary shall be sent to the various Powers.

"The distinction between patrician and plebeian rank shall be done away with, and men shall be selected for office according to ability, without distinction of birth.

"The law which renders the family and connections of a criminal liable to punishment shall be totally abrogated. The offender only shall be punished.

"Early marriages are strictly forbidden. A man must be twenty and a woman sixteen before they marry.

"Slavery shall be abolished.

"As it is difficult to test ability by literary essays alone, the throne is to be memorialized to alter the method of selecting officials.

"A circular is to be issued calling for a statement of the true amount and designation of all Royal taxes, leviable on farm lands, etc. A tabulated statement shall be drawn up showing what has been expended out of the income received by each department, the balance in hand, the amount due but not received, as well as an inventory of office furniture. A circular shall be issued calling for a statement of the total amount of expenditure in the provinces, civil as well as military. Taxes and rates and palace contributions are to be paid in money. Banks are to be

established for the issue of coin to furnish the people with capital for trading in rice and grain."

Mr. Hulbert draws attention to the fact that the complete independence of Korea is guaranteed. The change in the calendar is characteristic of Asiatic institutions. The Chinese, claiming suzerainty, imposed upon the Koreans the Mongol and Manchu calendars as a mark of dependence. That distinction between the classes will cease, he regards as a Utopian idea. He says:

"We Westerners talk about working up, but in Korea the great trouble is that a man of the upper classes, however desperate his circumstances, cannot throw off his coat and start in at the foot of the ladder. Any Korean can work his way up if he has brains and money; it is when the man of good blood has to tighten his belt 'to the sharp belly-pinch,' as Kipling has it, that caste distinctions become irksome. . . . The resolution, therefore, asserts the right of any man, however high his birth, to engage in any honest trade or occupation without forfeiting his claims to the name of gentleman. . . . This resolution is not so much a law as a statement of opinion designed to give direction to public opinion and gradually work it up to a point where the enunciation of such a principle will be unnecessary."

To abrogate the laws which render the family of a criminal responsible for his actions appears to the writer as a somewhat hasty step, for, unless the police of the country are organized in such a manner as to be able to track down criminals in a large majority of cases, there will be no strong deterrent to crime, and the latter state of the country will be worse than the first. The law limiting the marriageable age, and its supplementary provision allowing widows to marry as they please, will improve the moral status of the nation, but it will take time to convince the people of its value. Slavery existed only in a mild form in Korea, its worst feature being the sale of the wives and daughters of law-breakers. Concerning the choice of officials from literary men Mr. Hulbert says:

"Koreans all knew that the literary examination was a farce, and that the man who could pay most handsomely or who had the ear of one of the influential officials would be sure to draw the prize, and yet there still remained the old, time-honored custom of going up to the capital and trying for a prize, and as the unexpected does sometimes happen, chance might favor them. Korean tradition and folklore are full of stories about examinations, and the doing away with them will eliminate a most fundamental factor from Korean life of to-day. It will be like taking from the Swiss his Alpine horn, from the Englishman his Christmas, from the Spaniard his bull-fight, from the Italian his Carnival, from the Turk his Mecca."

Mr. Hulbert does not think the proposed financial reforms easy, but the Government will at least know where it stands; a clear outline of receipts and expenditure will be the death-blow to a large body of hangers-on who have been accustomed to take care of the surplus. The Government must know where the money goes, every dollar of it. The writer concludes his paper with the following remarks:

"It is hardly necessary to say that, as yet, few reforms have been put in operation. The Chinese calendar has been discarded. The whole scheme of the officary has been reorganized. The new coin has been put into circulation. The wearing of long sleeves by the *Nyanghau* class has been discontinued. A police force has been organized, and a law requiring the name of each inmate of each house to be posted on the front door has been enforced. The more radical reforms are still in abeyance, but upon the completion of the Council's work and its ratification by His Majesty they will doubtless be put in operation as rapidly as the still unsettled condition of the country will permit."

ACCORDING to *The Eastern World*, Yokohama, some Japanese patriots are intent upon raising a great monument in commemoration of the Japanese victories. It will be built of iron, similar to the Eiffel tower, and will be raised to a height of 1,000 feet. The lower floors are to be used for a permanent exhibition of Japanese industrial efforts. As the expenses will be only \$350,000, it should not be difficult to raise the necessary funds.